

Furman Magazine

Volume 50
Issue 2 Summer 2007

Article 16

6-1-2007

Felton's punishing style has NFL scouts taking notice

Vince Moore
Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

Recommended Citation

Moore, Vince (2007) "Felton's punishing style has NFL scouts taking notice," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 50 : Iss. 2 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol50/iss2/16>

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.

Felton's punishing style has NFL scouts taking notice

Here's some vital information for that 185-pound free safety who suddenly discovers that he is the only thing standing between Jerome Felton and the end zone. The 6-foot, 245-pound Felton is running as if he still has something to prove, and he is not looking to avoid a collision.

Then again, what defensive player who faces the Furman football team this fall won't already know that? Felton, a senior fullback, is an all-Southern Conference scoring machine and a short-yardage master — he scored six rushing touchdowns against Western Carolina last season. And his bruising running style and penchant for punishing tacklers bring an additional element of peril to the equation.

An equal opportunity punisher, Felton flattens defensive linemen, linebackers and defensive backs alike, and he is not averse to carrying three or four tacklers into the end zone with him. In fact, Paladin coach Bobby Lamb can't remember the last time an isolated defensive back did anything but dive at Felton's feet to bring him down.

"Once he breaks into the open field and gets moving, it only takes one time to figure out you don't want to tackle him up high," Lamb says. "Even if you're trying to hit him in the thighs, it had better be a good shot because he doesn't go down easy that way, either."

Wofford coach Mike Ayers calls Felton a "punishing runner" who wears down defenses during the course of a game. "The best way to defend Jerome is to try and keep him from getting the ball," says Ayers, "but not many people have figured out how to do that."

As for all the talk about bruising running styles and punishing hits, Felton isn't one to argue. "If you're going to be a good back in college you have to develop a complete running game, and there are times you have to run around people," he says. "In my heart, though, I want to run over you more than go around you."

Felton isn't merely big, however. He is also fast, agile and a reliable receiver, which is why he enters his senior season as one of Furman's all-time leading running backs. He ranks 11th on the career rushing list with 1,947 yards and holds single-season team records for scoring (140 points) and rushing touchdowns (23).

He is just two touchdowns shy of Louis Ivory's career record of 53 rushing touchdowns.

Then there's Felton's determination to prove himself, a calling that hasn't diminished since he arrived at Furman as an unheralded freshman. Although he was the same size as now in high school and rushed for more than 1,300 yards his senior season, no Division I-A schools gave him a look. According to Lamb, Felton was hard to find because he attended a small, Class A school in Tennessee — Sequoyah High in Madisonville — that fell neatly between the newspaper coverage areas of Knoxville and Chattanooga.

"We weren't familiar with Jerome, either," Lamb says, "but he attended a camp at Vanderbilt and Bobby Johnson [the former Furman coach] said we should take a look at him."

Felton believed he was good enough to garner at least some respect from Division I-A programs. When it didn't happen, he came to Furman with something to prove. "That's my mentality, sometimes to a fault," he says. "I came with a chip on my shoulder and was determined to make a contribution as a true freshman."

He did, working his way into the starting lineup by the midpoint of the season and sharing the team's Freshman of the Year honor with safety Andrew Thacker.

The last two seasons have guaranteed that he is no longer being overlooked, as he has attracted the interest of National Football League scouts.

Lamb says, "We are hearing that Jerome is rated as one of the top five fullbacks in the country.

He has a great chance of being drafted."

Felton also realizes that he received the kind of opportunity at Furman that he might not have gotten elsewhere. "I'm very happy to be here," he says. "Things happen the way they do for a reason."

Although his primary goal is to play in the NFL, his gifts are not limited to football. He scored high enough on the ACT in the seventh grade that he was cleared to take courses at nearby Hiwassee College while in high school, and he enrolled at Furman with 19 hours of college credit. With a 3.25 grade-point average in political science, Felton says, "If football doesn't work out, I'll most likely go to law school."

But there's no reason for him to get ahead of himself just yet. He still has more yards to gain, touchdowns to score and tacklers to punish.

— VINCE MOORE

